

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-12 (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A valve device for controlling fluid flow, comprising
a hollow body bounding a flow path for the fluid through said valve device,
a valve obturating member in said flow path and movable between a more obturating position and a less obturating position for permitting lesser and greater flows of said fluid along said path, which flows urge said member in the sense from said more obturating position to said less obturating position, said valve obturating member including magnetic portions,
an electrically energizable inductor which encircles said magnetic portions and which, while remaining stationary relative to said body and while electrically energized, acts upon said valve obturating member with a force to urge said valve obturating member in the sense from said less obturating position to said more obturating position,
an electrical supply arrangement connected to said inductor, and
a control arrangement which is connected to said electrical supply arrangement and which serves to adjust the magnitude of the current supplied to said inductor by said supply arrangement and thereby to adjust said force.
14. (Previously Presented) A valve device according to claim 13 and having no moving parts other than said valve obturating member.
15. (Currently amended) A valve device according to claim 13 ~~or~~ 14, and further comprising a valve seat on said flow-path, said more obturating position being an end position in which said valve obturating member is fully closed on the valve seat, so as to be applied to the seat in a substantially fluid-tight manner,

and said valve seat facing downstream of said flow path, whereby said less obturating position is further downstream in said flow path than is said more obturating position.

16. (Previously Presented) A valve device according to claim 13, wherein there are a plurality of electrically energizable inductors, including said inductor, which, while remaining stationary relative to said body and while electrically energized, act to urge said valve obturating member in said sense, and which are connected to said electrical supply arrangement, said control arrangement serving to control the currents supplied to the respective inductors by said supply arrangements, and said inductors constituting a linear motor.
17. (Previously Presented) A valve device according to claim 16 and further comprising a linear encoder which is connected to said control arrangement and whereby the position of said valve obturating member along said flow path is determinable.
18. (Currently Amended) In a filler of a machine the output of which is filled containers filled with said fluid, ~~[[a]] the~~ valve device according to claim 13.
19. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling fluid flow, comprising providing a valve obturating member and an inductor encircling magnetic portions of said obturating member, producing fluid flow along a flow path in a direction such that said fluid flow urges ~~[[a]]~~ said valve obturating member in a sense from a more obturating position to a less obturating position, electrically energizing ~~[[an]]~~ said inductor, while said inductor remains stationary, to cause said inductor to act inductively upon said magnetic portions of said valve obturating member with a force to urge said valve obturating member in the sense from said less obturating position to said more obturating position, and varying the electrical current supplied to said inductor to adjust said force.

20. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 19, wherein said more obturating position is an end position in which said valve obturating member prevents flow of said fluid past said valve obturating member, said less obturating position being further downstream in said flow path than is said more obturating position.
21. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 19, and including electrically energizing a plurality of inductors, including said inductor, while said inductors remain stationary, to cause said inductors to act upon said valve obturating member to urge said valve obturating member in the sense from said less obturating position to said more obturating position.
22. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 21, and further comprising determining the position of said valve obturating member along said flow path and controlling current supply to the individual inductors accordingly.
23. (Currently Amended) A method according to [[any]] claim 19, and further comprising filling with the fluid a container downstream of said valve obturating member.
24. (New) A valve device for controlling fluid flow, comprising
a hollow body bounding a flow path for the fluid through said valve device,
a valve obturator in the form of a unit and in said flow path and movable between a more obturating position and a less obturating position for permitting lesser and greater flows of said fluid along said path, which flows urge said member in the sense from said more obturating position to said less obturating position, said valve obturator including magnetic portions,
an electrically energizable inductor which encircles said magnetic portions and which, while remaining stationary relative to said body and while electrically energized, acts upon said valve obturator with a force to urge said valve obturator in the sense from said less obturating position to said more obturating position,

an electrical supply arrangement connected to said inductor, and

a control arrangement which is connected to said electrical supply arrangement and which serves to adjust the magnitude of the current supplied to said inductor by said supply arrangement and thereby to adjust said force.

25. (New) A valve device according to claim 24 and having no moving parts other than said valve obturator.
26. (New) A valve device according to claim 24, and further comprising a valve seat on said flow-path, said more obturating position being an end position in which said valve obturator is fully closed on the valve seat, so as to be applied to the seat in a substantially fluid-tight manner, and said valve seat facing downstream of said flow path, whereby said less obturating position is further downstream in said flow path than is said more obturating position.
27. (New) A valve device according to claim 24, wherein there are a plurality of electrically energizable inductors, including said inductor, which, while remaining stationary relative to said body and while electrically energized, act to urge said valve obturator in said sense, and which are connected to said electrical supply arrangement, said control arrangement serving to control the currents supplied to the respective inductors by said supply arrangements, and said inductors constituting a linear motor.
28. (New) A valve device according to claim 27 and further comprising a linear encoder which is connected to said control arrangement and whereby the position of said valve obturator along said flow path is determinable.
29. (New) In a filler of a machine the output of which is filled containers, the valve device according to claim 24.
30. (New) A method of controlling fluid flow, comprising providing a valve obturator in the form of a unit and an inductor encircling magnetic portions of said

obturator, producing fluid flow along a flow path in a direction such that said fluid flow urges said valve obturator in a sense from a more obturating position to a less obturating position, electrically energizing an inductor, while said inductor remains stationary, to cause said inductor to act inductively upon said valve obturating member with a force to urge said valve obturating member in the sense from said less obturating position to said more obturating position, and varying the electrical current supplied to said inductor to adjust said force.

31. (New) A method according to claim 30, wherein said more obturating position is an end position in which said valve obturator prevents flow of said fluid past said valve obturator, said less obturating position being further downstream in said flow path than is said more obturating position.
32. (New) A method according to claim 30, and including electrically energizing a plurality of inductors, including said inductor, while said inductors remain stationary, to cause said inductors to act upon said valve obturator to urge said valve obturator in the sense from said less obturating position to said more obturating position.
33. (New) A method according to claim 32, and further comprising determining the position of said valve obturator along said flow path and controlling current supply to the individual inductors accordingly.
34. (New) A method according to claim 30, and further comprising filling with the fluid a container downstream of said valve obturator.